

State of Alaska FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources Public Services Office Component Budget Summary

Component: Public Services Office

Contact: Wyn Menefee, Public Information Officer

Tel: (907) 269-8412 **Fax:** (907) 269-8901 **E-mail:** wynm@dnr.state.ak.us

Component Mission

The Department of Natural Resources Public Information Centers (PICs) provide one stop shopping for the public to interface with DNR by keeping the public informed and providing easy access to this complex agency. The outcome is to improve the public's ability to use and enjoy the State land and resources.

Component Services Provided

The two Public Information Centers (PICs) provide a place for the public to go to ask questions, pay bills, get forms, obtain services, and complete research. The PICs are the difference between a complex agency understandable only to experts, and a public-friendly agency where forms, permits, and answers to questions are easily available to everyone.

The services provided under this component allow the department to efficiently conduct business with the public. These centers provide basic essential business functions and services that insure timely processing of applications and payments. They also provide the time consuming public interface to allow other DNR employees to more efficiently conduct their assigned duties without interruption. The PICs make sure the public is able to find and obtain what they need from DNR while at the same time making the public aware of the need, purpose, and value of the State's land and resource assets and their appropriate management.

The Public Information Center's services provide two primary outputs.

- Provide essential services to the public.
- Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations, and activities.

Output 1. Provide essential services to the public. The PIC operates two Public Information Centers. The main center is in Anchorage. A smaller center operates in Fairbanks.

The public information centers receive payments from the public for sales, rents, leases, bond pools, royalties, and other activities. They have full receipting capability for any payments made to the divisions. Last fiscal year the PIC staff receipted over 7.6 million dollars in individual transactions. The PICs receive and process applications for land and resource use. In order to alleviate public frustration and lower application processing cycle times, it is essential that the PIC staff is knowledgeable enough to get the correct application for whatever the desired use and to insure that the applicant correctly fills out the application and attaches necessary documentation. The PICs reserve public use cabins throughout the state, sell annual park passes and decals, and provide park information requested. PIC staff provide land research assistance to the public. Not only do they sell land status plats, interpret area plans, and pull case file abstracts, they provide the personalized assistance required to help the public understand the information given. The public can obtain and purchase maps and publications that help people to understand the resources and management of Alaska's lands. The PICs also provide the primary public contact for department land sales, marketing, informing, selling, and processing applications. Last fiscal year the PIC participated in seven new land sales and three other continuing sales, each with different rules of participation.

Output 2. Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations, and activities.

The PIC staff maintain and improve brochures and fact sheets about State land programs and activities requiring authorizations. These fact sheets must be kept current and accurate as programs and regulations change. The public also must be informed of the regulations to facilitate appropriate use of State land and facilities. The PICs utilize current technology to better disseminate DNR information including maintaining the DNR front door web pages. This requires daily upkeep of the web pages to insure accurate and timely information is provided. Through media releases, public service announcements, and interviews the PICs insure effective media coverage on current DNR actions and issues. Through coordination with other agencies and information centers the PICs help the public to understand DNR's interagency relationships and to insure accurate and current DNR information is disseminated. The PICs also provide feedback to DNR employees about public concerns, requests, desires, or misunderstandings. Essentially the PICs act as two-way information brokers and often as interpreters to "governmentese."

Component Goals and Strategies

Outcome: Public and private use and enjoyment of State land, and resources.

Goals:

1. Provide essential services to the public.

Accurately receipt all payments received in the PIC from the public for sales, rents, leases, bond pools, royalties, and other activities.

Receive and process applications for land and resource use within a two-day cycle time and insure that applicants submit the correct applications necessary for their situation.

Provide as many business functions as possible on the internet.

2. Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations and activities.

Provide personal assistance and dispense information to the public to insure that they obtain necessary understanding for that which they are seeking.

Maintain easy to understand fact sheets about DNR programs and authorized activities and distribute other related printed material.

Utilize current technology to better disseminate DNR information including maintaining the DNR front door web pages.

Insure effective media coverage on current DNR actions and issues.

Key Component Issues for FY2002 – 2003

As much of the public is becoming computer literate, DNR is attempting to shift some of its business practices to be available by internet. The PIC will maximize the use of the internet where possible to disseminate information and to conduct business. The PIC will be integrally involved in maintaining internet sites to keep them current and accurate, but the human component will not be overlooked as this is what most people want. Most people still want that personalized service to help them through the government maze that seems so overwhelming. That is where the PIC will continue to be crucial in maintaining the business traffic into the future.

The PIC will continue to assist in any projects that streamline government processes for the public and utilize current and future technology to increase efficiencies. We will continue to work with other divisions and sections on a web based application process, GIS utilization, imaging data for easy storage and retrieval, mining claim submission improvements, web based land sale improvements, and a restructuring of the DNR web pages. Then we will move to other e-commerce functions such as making public use cabin reservations via the internet.

The PIC will also be closely involved in the expanded land sales program. The PIC will assist in marketing, sales, and implementation of the new and existing land sales programs.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2001

The PICs have produced multitudes of satisfied DNR customers, even when they were paying us money. That is because the PIC staff emphasizes customer service. Regardless of the issue or the nature of the contact, the staff endeavors to see customers leaving satisfied knowing they were treated well, professionally, and with respect. This helps improve the overall image of state government that we are here to serve the people of this state.

The majority of the Alaska State Park public use cabins were rented by the PICs. The knowledgeable PIC staff spent the time necessary to make sure people rented the cabins best suiting their needs and abilities. People want so much more than just a fact sheet on the cabins, they want local knowledge of conditions, when the fish run, how's the hike, is the beach nice for kids, and much more. From the comments the PIC receives, it is obvious that they help make those

recreational visits special.

Many people came to the PICs not knowing exactly what they wanted or not understanding how to get something from DNR. The PIC worked with the customers to provide the information needed and helped people through the permitting and regulatory process as needed. The PIC staff have spent the hours necessary to assist people researching land status or teaching customers how to conduct their own research. If customers had to speak with others beyond the PIC, the PIC staff refined the questions to focus the time spent with other DNR staff. This has prevented numerous hours of interrupted DNR staff time. This in turn helped produce efficiency in DNR by improving cycle times.

The PICs assisted over 25,000 customers in person during FY01, a 67% increase from FY00. The PIC also receipted over \$7.6 million in revenues in FY01, representing a \$3 million increase. In addition, the PIC produced or assisted in distribution of over 186 media releases and 5 internal DNR newsletters. The PIC assisted in the marketing, implementation, and in-person sales for seven new land sales and three other continuing sales, each with different rules of participation. The PIC assisted in developing and maintaining the over 50 DNR web pages that more efficiently relay information to the public. The PIC web page alone received over 48,000 unique visits in FY01 and the DNR site as a whole received over 192,000 unique visits during the same time. The PIC was able install appropriate technology hardware to utilize the technology improvements.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

The PIC provides the public, contact and outreach required by the statutory authority of other components. It has no specific statutory authority.

Public Services Office
Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

	FY2001 Actuals	FY2002 Authorized	FY2003 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	291.4	309.9	343.7
72000 Travel	0.3	3.0	3.0
73000 Contractual	1.9	25.5	25.5
74000 Supplies	6.4	7.0	7.0
75000 Equipment	13.5	3.0	3.0
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	313.5	348.4	382.2
Funding Sources:			
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	310.9	348.4	382.2
1061 Capital Improvement Project Receipts	2.6	0.0	0.0
Funding Totals	313.5	348.4	382.2

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2001 Actuals	FY2002 Authorized	FY2002 Cash Estimate	FY2003 Governor	FY2004 Forecast
<u>Unrestricted Revenues</u>						
None.		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<u>Restricted Revenues</u>						
Interagency Receipts	51015	310.9	348.4	358.0	382.2	387.0
Capital Improvement Project Receipts	51200	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Total		313.5	348.4	358.0	382.2	387.0
Total Estimated Revenues		313.5	348.4	358.0	382.2	387.0

Public Services Office**Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003**

An intern will be utilized in each Public Information Center in Anchorage and Fairbanks to assist with customer service and preparation for the land sales.

Summary of Component Budget Changes**From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor***All dollars in thousands*

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2002 Authorized	0.0	0.0	348.4	348.4
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Year 3 Labor Costs - Net Change from FY2002	0.0	0.0	7.8	7.8
Proposed budget increases:				
-Public Information Center Customer Assistance for Land Sales	0.0	0.0	26.0	26.0
FY2003 Governor	0.0	0.0	382.2	382.2

Public Services Office

Personal Services Information

Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs		
	<u>FY2002</u>	<u>FY2003</u>		
	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	6	6	Annual Salaries	247,267
Part-time	0	0	COLA	5,662
Nonpermanent	0	2	Premium Pay	0
			Annual Benefits	94,516
			<i>Less 1.08% Vacancy Factor</i>	(3,745)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	6	8	Total Personal Services	343,700

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Information Officer III	1	0	0	0	1
Natural Resource Off I	1	1	0	0	2
Natural Resource Tech II	2	1	0	0	3
Student Intern	1	1	0	0	2
Totals	5	3	0	0	8